

**Pakistan's Dilemma of Kashmir Policy, Trouble Spots:  
The Post 2016 Perceptions and World Response**

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The state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has been a source of enmity between Pakistan and India since 1947. Though the incident of 9/11 pushed Kashmir issue to backburner, the year 2016 proved as a turning point for the youth of Kashmir when martyrdom of Burhan Wani imparted a new dimension to freedom struggle and gave birth to a novel identity and philosophy of 'wanism'. This article aims to review human rights violations in J&K and Pakistan's dilemma of Kashmir policy in the post 2016 era. The study highlights trouble spots while analyzing policies of PML-N and PTI governments towards Kashmir conflict. It also sheds light on Prime Minister Modi's coercive Kashmir policy and the response of key world countries about human rights violations in J&K, followed by conclusion.

**Keywords:** Kashmir, conflict, UN, Pakistan, India, South Asia

The region of J&K has been a bone of contention between the two nuclear states of South Asia i.e. India and Pakistan because it is an unfinished agenda of partition of subcontinent. It is ironic that United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions, which were passed in 1948 and 1949 respectively to hold plebiscite in Kashmir are still pending to be implemented only because of the stiff stance of India. In fact, New Delhi is of the view that Kashmir issue has to be resolved bilaterally as

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**Contributions of Authors:**

1. Dr. Muhammad Shafiq has contributed in research conceptualization, acquisition and data analysis, draft and realized the idea of paper. This manuscript is an extended form of his MPhil thesis on Kashmir.
2. Dr. Razia Sultana has worked on methodology and guided to improve the theoretical part of the study.
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per Simla Agreement signed by both Pakistan and India in 1972, after the 1971 war, whereas Pakistan wants to resolve the issue according to UNSC resolutions (Ambrogio, 2018).

Historically speaking, the people of Kashmir, long before the departure of the British from sub-continent, started their freedom struggle from Dogra Raj. Due to inept partition process India occupied the state of Kashmir. However, the Kashmiris (Muslim dominant parts) posed a tough resistance and thus India despite its massive military power has fallen in a strategic dilemma (Shafiq, 2004, p.1). The year 1988 marked the beginning of indigenous freedom struggle in Kashmir ("Three decades on", 2018). Since then, J&K has been bleeding due to unjust behavior of the world in general and India in particular. In addition, inability of Pakistan and India to reach any consensus has added agonies to life of Kashmiris. About hundred thousand Kashmiris embraced martyrdom in last 31 years ("Human rights abuses in Jammu and Kashmir", 2019). The year 2016 marked a turning point for Kashmiris when a young leader Burhan Wani, who changed the narrative of 'guerrilla warfare', became an icon for young generation and imparted a new strength to freedom movement by offering his life and philosophy. He came on the scene with full identity and avoided anonymity in the struggle. He used modern tools like social media to spread his message. Many freedom fighters in Kashmir got inspiration from his philosophy of 'wanism' and joined freedom movement. For example, Manan Wani, a former PhD student, who turned into a freedom fighter, embraced martyrdom in October 2018 at the hands of Indian security forces. Actually, 'wanism' has changed the nature of the freedom struggle by introducing social media, i.e. Facebook and Twitter, as a tool of inspiration ("Burhan Wani; A chapter of Valor", 2018). Presently, at least 0.5 million Indian soldiers are deployed in J&K to suppress the freedom struggle yet the struggle remains popular among the youth ("Three decades on", 2018).

It is a fact that brutal policies of Indian government forced the youth of J&K to start militant struggle against India in the 1980s. Even the Indian democracy, which it used to appease Kashmiris, equally failed because it was forcefully imposed and the masses of Kashmir remained irrelevant to the system that was introduced by Indian government under Article 370 (Mantoo, 2018). Indian policies even eroded Kashmiriyat once considered an element of harmony between Muslims and Hindu Pandits (Wani, 2018).

The study aims to analyze Pakistan's dilemma of Kashmir policy in the post 2016 era and the global response including UN, US, OIC, Turkey and China. It focuses on policy statements of PML-N leadership and PTI's government in Pakistan. It traces the policy of Pakistan toward Kashmir under the government of President General Pervez Musharraf and President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan People's Party (PPP). It sheds light on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Kashmir strategy and dynamics of freedom struggle changed after the death of Burhan Wani and Manan Wani in 2016 and 2018 respectively. It examines trouble spots in Pakistan's Kashmir policy by comparing policies of PML-N and PTI governments. It also offers viable recommendations and conclusion with respect to the resolution of Kashmir issue.

## **Method**

### **Significance and Scope**

The methodology of research followed in the study is mix type of research focused on both qualitative and descriptive with historical outlooks. The collected data is mostly based on secondary sources. Facts and events are narrated and explained with logic and argument. The main contribution and significant of this study is to help policy makers of Pakistan to understand the new dimensions of freedom struggle in Kashmir and realize world community that Kashmir issue should be resolved to maintain peace and stability in the region. Otherwise, nuclear war is eminent between India and

Pakistan in the near future as the world has already observed an air clash between the two neighboring enemies in February 2019.

Though the scope of the study is limited only to analyze Pakistan's problem of Kashmir policy especially after 2016 period and response of UN, US, OIC, Turkey and China yet the study opens new avenues of research by providing a foundation for researchers. In this backdrop, further research can be under taken on the response of other major powers like Russia, EU and UK towards Kashmir issue. In addition, other areas i.e. changing behavior of local political parties and freedom groups in J&K in the backdrop of brutal policies of Prime Minister Modi government can be explored. In addition, Kashmir issue with reference to Indian response can also be analyzed in the backdrop of recent concepts of post-colonialism and nationalism especially focusing on psycho-nationalism.

### **Pakistan's Kashmir Policy: An Overview**

#### **Musharraf's Kashmir Policy**

Pakistan has been supporting Kashmiris for the last three decades in their freedom struggle on diplomatic, human and moral fronts. For Kashmir, in 1999, South Asia was at the brink of nuclear war when Pakistan and India fought a limited Kargil war. The 9/11 terrorist incident significantly impacted the Kashmir issue because the US invaded Afghanistan with full military might and dragged Pakistan into its War on Terror (WoT). At that time, the US was more interested in Afghanistan than Kashmir and wanted Pakistan to play its role in WoT, hence, the Kashmir issue went into background. This situation partially helped India that tried its best to link freedom struggle of Kashmir with terrorism (Shafiq, 2018, p.247).

In 2002, attack on Indian parliament by militants brought both Pakistan and India to a military standoff again. From 2002 onward, Kashmir has been an irritant between Pakistan and India. Even Pakistan's flexible strategy on Kashmir during President Pervez Musharraf's era could not help to resolve the issue partly because India followed a rigid policy. President Musharraf took the initiative and presented 'out of the box' solutions in 2004 and 2006 respectively to resolve the issue ("Kashmir solution", 2012). His formulas were a clear deviation from Pakistan's earlier, original stance of UN resolutions. During Musharraf era (1999-2008), along with backdoor diplomacy efforts, a number of Pakistan-India dialogues were held on the issue of Kashmir, but no concrete result could be achieved.

#### **Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Kashmir**

After President Musharraf's exit from the political scene of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari of PPP assumed the power as President in 2008. Zardari government expressed its desire to improve relations with India, especially in the fields of trade and people to people contact by normalizing Kashmir issue. However, this policy did not bring any breakthrough between the two countries. PPP government (2008-2013) continued symbolic political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmir cause. During PPP tenure, the issue of Kashmir was mostly neglected and no serious efforts were seen in order to bring the issue in limelight. Meanwhile, India was not ready to talk with Pakistan due to Mumbai attack in 2008. Indian government blamed Pakistan for providing support to militants to make Mumbai attack possible. Pakistan expressed its desire to help India for investigation if the latter provided facts ("Mumbai attacks", 2008). The issue is still a source of concern for India. So when Indian government denied to talk with Pakistan, PPP government was only able to discuss issue of Kashmir in seminars or rallies held on the observation of 5<sup>th</sup> February as a solidarity day with Kashmiris. Leaders of PPP mostly relied on slogan politics and rhetoric about Kashmir's freedom.

### **Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Kashmir**

Nawaz Sharif of PML-N assumed power in 2013. He was considered as a leader to revive Pakistan's original policy on Kashmir as earlier President Musharraf had ignored UN resolutions on Kashmir. Despite Indian rigid attitude toward Kashmir, Prime Minister Sharif raised the issue while addressing the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) sessions. Even after his dismissal by Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) on Panama scandal, (Masood, 2017) PML-N government continued its diplomatic and moral support to Kashmir cause even under Nawaz Sharif's successor Shaheed Khakan Abbasi.

### **Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Statements on Kashmir**

After becoming Prime Minister of Pakistan for a third time, Nawaz Sharif, from the beginning, faced multiple issues at local and foreign fronts. At international level, Pakistan was facing isolation on the issue of harboring terrorism in tribal areas. Its relations with the US were strained during President Obama's second term. Even Obama's successor Donald Trump also pressed Pakistan for not taking military actions against Haqqani Network.

The US and Afghanistan government considered Haqqani Network a potential threat and held it responsible along with Afghan Taliban for terrorist attacks in Afghanistan (Shafiq, 2018, p.140). Meanwhile, India, Iran and Afghanistan developed a nexus that Pakistan perceived as a counter CPEC by establishing Chahbahar port in Iran. Indian forces also started violation across LoC by targeting civilians. Indian military also claimed surgical strikes on LoC that was denied by Pakistan army by saying that any such action would be replied with full force (Rehman, 2016).

On internal front, Nawaz Sharif faced a strong opposition from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led by Chairman Imran Khan on the issue of rigging 2013 general elections and corruption. Ultimately, Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by SCP in 2017 and Shahid Khakan Abbasi replaced him as Prime Minister of Pakistan (Shafiq, Sultana & Munir, 2017).

Earlier, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif who also had portfolios of defence Minister and Foreign Minister desired to normalize relations with India without forcing India to resolve the issue of Kashmir. Nawaz Sharif's tilt toward India to promote friendly trade relations annoyed the military establishment in Pakistan. Meanwhile, some incidents like Indian Prime Minister Modi's private visit to Jati Umra Raiwand in 2015, (Haider, 2015) Nawaz's secret meeting with Indian 'steel magnate' Sajjan Jindal in Murree in 2017, (Yousaf, 2017) tight lips of Nawaz on the arrest of Indian spy Kulbhushan Yadav and his terrorist activities in Balochistan, Dawn leaks scandal, further strained civil-military relations. It is viewed that due to the absence of permanent foreign minister in PML-N government, Pakistan was unable to pursue its case more forcefully about Kashmir at international level. However, even having 'soft' corner toward India, Nawaz, under extreme public and army pressure, highlighted the issue of Kashmir at international level while addressing at UNGA sessions held in 2013, 2015 and 2016. The detail of the speeches is given in ensuing paragraphs.

In his address to UNGA session held in 2013, Nawaz Sharif said that miseries of Kashmiri people could not be ignored due to power politics. He demanded the world to decide the issue of Kashmir according to the wishes of Kashmiris and as per UNSC resolutions. He added that the issue is still pending on the agenda of UNSC ("Address by His Excellency", 2013).

In 2015, while addressing UNGA session, Nawaz Sharif highlighted the issue of Kashmir and the role of Pakistan in eradicating the menace of terrorism. He added that Operation Zerb-e-Azab and

National Action Plan (NAP) were used as anti-terrorism tools. While focusing on issue of Kashmir, he said that masses were oppressed by Indian occupation. He urged that the world should redress this injustice. By expressing solidarity, Nawaz Sharif said that Kashmiris should also be consulted while resolving the issue as they are the key party in the dispute. In his opinion since 1947, the Kashmir issue remained unresolved and UNSC resolutions remained unimplemented.

He called it a persistent failure of the UN. At the occasion, Nawaz Sharif proposed 4-point formula to resolve the issue of Kashmir and maintain peace with India: "first, Pakistan and India formalize and respect the 2003 understanding for a complete ceasefire on the LoC in Kashmir. For this purpose, Pakistan calls for UNMOGIP's expansion to monitor the observance of the ceasefire. Second, Pakistan and India reaffirm that they will not resort to the use or the threat of use of force under any circumstances. This is a central element of the UN Charter. Third, steps be taken to demilitarize Kashmir. Fourth, agree to an unconditional mutual withdrawal from Siachen Glacier, the world's highest battleground" ("Statement by Pm", 2015).

The killing of Burhan Wani in 2016 aggravated the situation in Kashmir. This ensuing unrest provided an opportunity to Pakistan to highlight human rights violations of Kashmir. While speaking at UNGA session, Nawaz Sharif recognized Burhan Wani as a Kashmiri leader and called him s symbol of new Kashmiri 'intifada'. He demanded to start an independent inquiry under UN to investigate brutalities of Indian forces faced by innocent Kashmiris. He reiterated Pakistan's support to right to self-determination for Kashmiris and demanded the UN to play its part to resolve the issue. He informed that regional stability in South Asia is based on peaceful solution of Kashmir and for that purpose, Pakistan was ready to dialogue with India. However, Indian government was not willing to talk and put unacceptable conditions for negotiations ("PM Nawaz terms", 2016).

Pakistan's representative at the UN, Maleeha Lodhi regularly raised Kashmir issue. She termed Wani's killing as an extrajudicial killing of a Kashmiri leader and demanded an independent investigation of the incident ("Pakistan demands independent inquiry", 2016). In her address at UN in 2016, Maleeha Lodhi said that if world wanted peace in South Asia then it should take steps to resolve the issue of Kashmir. Meanwhile, India should be stopped truce violations along the LOC ("Full Text of Dr Maleeha", 2017). However, Pakistan had to face an embarrassment when Maleeha Lodhi mistakenly showed photo of a Palestinian girl pretending as a Kashmiri girl of a victim of pellet-gun used by Indian forces (Pandey & Imran, 2017). The action of Pakistan's envoy at UN was criticized by Indian side and that called it a misleading action by Indian forces (Pandey & Imran, 2017). On internal front analysts described this an event that discredited Pakistan at international forum. According to Hussain Nadeem "the ambassador's speech was, however, short-lived and lost credibility before it could even develop one" (Nadim, 2017).

### **Shahbaz Sharif's Statements on Kashmir**

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was ousted by SCP orders on Panama case in 2017. PML-N General Body elected Shahbaz Sharif as president of PML-N. Shahbaz Sharif also continued rhetoric politics on Kashmir and condemned imposition of governor's rule in Indian occupied Kashmir in June 2017. In his opinion this act clearly showed the dreadful failure of India's Kashmir policy. Shahbaz said, "A government of the BJP's own choosing cannot complete its tenure indicates that India has failed miserably to manipulate or maintain its control in J & K" ("Shahbaz Raps Governor's", 2018). He also referred to the international reports on the human rights violations in Kashmir. He considered Indian army's use of pellet guns as a crime against humanity. He viewed that BJP's government in J&K had been completely exposed as a farce to hide its ugly face. In his opinion, special status given

to Kashmiris by India was not a substitute for people's right to self-determination. Shahbaz Sharif added that Pakistan fully supported the efforts of the people of Kashmir for seeking their absolute rights as per UN Charter. He went further by saying that Pakistan has stood by them through thick and thin and would continue to do so. PML-N leader Shahbaz also welcomed the UN's demand for an international investigation into human rights abuses in J&K ("Shahbaz Raps Governor's", 2018). In another statement, on 8 April, 2018, Shahbaz pledged to make Kashmir a "part of Pakistan". While attacking on Indian Prime Minister Modi, he said that "seeing the barbarism and brutalities Modi is enforcing in J&K, our blood boils" (Beg, 2018).

It is interesting to note that PML-N government and its leaders while highlighting the issue of Kashmir at international level mostly relied on the events happened in J&K. Human rights violations in J&K and the concept of 'wanism' provided them a chance to raise Kashmir issue at international forums and convince the world especially Muslim states to speak in the favor of Kashmiris. Whereas on internal front, it is observed that the same Kashmir, which PML-N government promised to make Pakistan's part, found little mention in its manifesto announced well before the general election of 2018 (Beg, 2018). This shows a significant difference while dealing with the issue of Kashmir internally and at international level by PML-N government.

#### **Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Kashmir**

For PTI leadership, Kashmir is a core issue between Pakistan and India that should be resolved by negotiations. They also moved at the foot prints of PML-N and made efforts to highlight Kashmir problem at UN and other forums like OIC. In ensuing paragraphs, the study covers statements of PTI leadership and government policy on Kashmir.

#### **Imran Khan's Vision on Kashmir**

On 26 July 2018, after general elections, Chairman PTI Imran Khan, in his winning speech, expressed his willingness to improve Pakistan's relations with India. He said that the blame game should be stopped as it would be harmful to South Asia's peace and stability. In his opinion, if India takes one step toward Pakistan then Pakistan will take two, but at least both sides need a start. Imran Khan considered Kashmir a "core" issue and suggested that the issue may be resolved through negotiation. He added that trade is the key for both countries to eradicate poverty from South Asia ("Kashmir Core Issue", 2018). Initially India accepted Imran Khan's suggestions. However, after some hours it declined to negotiate, as Pakistan had released a postal ticket highlighting Burhan Wani as a hero.

#### **Shah Mehmood Qureshi's Speech at UNGA**

Pakistan under PTI followed its traditional stance on Kashmir. In his address at UNGA session held in September 2018, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi highlighted human rights violations in the J&K. He said that since long Kashmiri people have been anguishing for the right of self-determination while facing brutalities of Indian forces. He added that "for over seventy years now, it has remained on the agenda of the UNSC and a blot on the conscience of humanity". Qureshi told the UNGA session that there is no ultimate peace in South Asia until the issue of Kashmir resolved as per UN resolutions. He appreciated UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for publishing report on human rights in Indian occupied Kashmir. He added that India could not use the tag of terrorism any longer as this would be unjustified with the masses of Kashmir who are fighting for the freedom. Qureshi also demanded the UN to establish a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the violations in Kashmir and fix the responsibility. He added that "Pakistan will welcome the Commission to Azad Kashmir, and hope that India too, will do the same". He also condemned Indian

forces for violating LoC in Kashmir and mindset of Indian government to launch a limited war with Pakistan just to cover its position in J&K ("Statement by Foreign", 2018).

### **Meeting of APHC with Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari**

In October 2018, a delegation of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) visited Islamabad and met Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari. They discussed UN report on Kashmir and ways to resolve the issue. She said that "Pakistan would move beyond rhetoric to finding a conflict resolution solution premised on plebiscite". She criticized Indian government for denying the right of self-determination to Kashmiris that was assured by UN resolutions. She urged world to play its role in resolving the issue. She portrayed human rights violations in J&K as crimes against humanity. And she reiterated full support of Pakistan for the freedom movement and freedom fighters in Kashmir ("Pakistan Reaffirms Support", 2018).

### **Modi's Policy toward Kashmir**

Narendra Modi became Prime Minister of India in 2014. It is interesting to note that an aggressive policy shift was seen toward Kashmir with the change of government in India. In March 2015, Modi-led BJP government and the Muslim Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party (PDP) formed a coalition government in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). Indian government followed a hard and aggressive policy toward Kashmir and Pakistan. Human rights violations at large scale by Indian army inflamed an unrest among the youth. Furthermore, in 2016, Burhan Wani's martyrdom infused a new spirit among third generation of Kashmiris toward freedom struggle. A series of protests erupted in Kashmir that led to a continued unrest among the youth. Resultantly hundreds of people died and thousands were injured due to military actions of the government. Even Prime Minister Modi's aggressive policy toward IOK forced Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti to resign in June 2018 and on the same day, India imposed governor rule in IOK (Beg, 2018).

BJP government under Modi has been following a highhanded and ruthless policy in IOK where Indian forces are given full support and immunity against any kind of human rights violations in suppressing protests. It is reported that hundreds of protesters were blinded by Indian shotgun pellets. Keeping in view the deteriorating situation and violation of human rights in IOK, UN published, first time in its history, human rights report on Kashmir and called to hold an inquiry into various violations committed in IOK. It encouraged India to curb excessive use of force due to which unlawful killings and injuries were happening. However, India rejected the UN human rights report on IOK (Beg, 2018).

The Modi government has been facing various challenge due to three major developments: first is how to cope UN pressure for the investigation of human rights violations in Kashmir, second, Prime Minister Imran Khan's move for peace talks; third, how to win general elections to be held in India in 2019 by using anti-Pakistan enmity (Naureen, 2018). On 29 September 2018, on the occasion of UNGA 73<sup>rd</sup> session, Indian Minister for External Affairs Sushma Suraj blamed Pakistan for terrorism in India and Kashmir. She noted that Pakistan has been supporting insurgents and called them freedom fighters and even printed stamps of these insurgents. She claimed that terrorists are killing Indian soldiers. She also blamed Pakistan for sheltering terrorists and said that Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden was found from Pakistan. She even went further and accused Pakistan for not arresting Hafiz Saeed for his alleged role in Mumbai attack. She claimed that FATF has put Pakistan on gray list due to financing terrorism. She concluded that it is because of these reasons, Indian government has not been able to start talks with Pakistan as desired by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan in his letter to Indian Prime Minister Modi ("Full text of Sushma", 2018).

A suicide attack on 14 February 2019 by a Kashmiri namely Adal Dar on Indian paramilitary convoy in Pulwama district of J&K provided an opportunity to the Indian Prime Minister Modi who was facing a tough challenge from opposition parties in the backdrop of April/May 2019 general elections in India to start limited war against Pakistan. India blamed Jaesh-e-Muhammad (JeM), a militant group based in Pakistan for sponsoring the attack. Pakistan rejected the Indian allegations and asked to present concrete evidence for further investigation (Khalid, 2019, p.4). Despite Pakistan's call to restraint, on 26 February 2019 Indian Air Force (IAF) crossed Pakistan's air space and attacked on an alleged militant camp of JeM in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. However, Pakistan's response was swift and necessary to maintain conventional and nuclear deterrence in the region. Pakistan Air Force (PAF) shot down two of Indian Air Force Jets and even arrested a pilot of IAF Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman who was later on handed over to India in a good gesture. Pakistan's abrupt response upset the Indian plan of limited war or military action. However, India escalated the situation on LoC and continued heavy firing in Azad Kashmir killing civilians (Khalid, 2019, pp.5-6).

### **World Response towards Kashmir Ban Ki-moon and Kashmir**

In October 2016, Ban Ki-moon then UN Secretary General, gave a positive gesture by saying that the UN is ready to arbitrate peace talks between Pakistan and India. He expressed his concerns on growing tensions between Pakistan and India on the disputed territory of Kashmir. He urged both sides to stop exchange of fire to scale down the situation. UN Chief's statement came after the address of Nawaz Sharif in UNGA and his meeting with Pakistan's Ambassador to UN Maleeha Lodhi who requested Ban Ki-moon to intervene to elude disaster. It is noted that both sides exchanged fire after the attack on Indian military base in Uri on 18 September 2016 by Kashmiri freedom fighters. India blamed Pakistan for the attack and also claimed that in response India had carried out surgical strikes inside of Azad Kashmir across the LoC border to eradicate militant camps. Pakistan military denied the Indian claim of any adventure and said that "the notion of surgical strike linked to alleged terrorists' bases is an illusion being deliberately generated by India to create false effects" ("Ban Ki-moon offers", 2016).

### **Trump's Kashmir Policy**

After 9/11 incident, the US interest in South Asia was that Pakistan and India should live in peace and in this way it would be possible for Pakistan, an ally of the US to play its role in WoT in Afghanistan and FATA. Meanwhile, peace between Pakistan and India would provide an opportunity for India to contain the rise of China in Asia. It is viewed that the US always toed the Indian line on Kashmir. It urged both Pakistan and India to resolve their issues, including Kashmir, bilaterally (Shafiq, p.193). The same policy was followed by the Trump administration. However, it is interesting to note that both President Obama in 2009 and President Trump in 2016 respectively expressed their views during their election campaigns that they will play mediatory role to resolve the issue of Kashmir. After assuming power both leaders were unable to fulfil their promises. As a presidential candidate Donald Trump said that he would be glad to play his role as mediator to make peace between Pakistan and India.

He called Kashmir a 'very, very hot tinderbox'. He stated that "Well, I would love to see Pakistan and India get along because that's a very, very hot tinderbox.... That would be a very great thing. I hope they can do it" ("Kashmir is a Very Hot", 2016). Pakistan welcomed the remarks of Donald Trump. In December 2016, US Vice President Mike Pence admired Trump's "extraordinary deal-making skills" and said that these could be used to decrease strains among states and resolve

issues like Kashmir (Khan, 2016). Meanwhile, the US leadership expressed its desire that Pakistan and India should resolve the issue of Kashmir through dialogue (Shah, 2018). The US also urged Pakistan to cooperate with India in investigating Uri incident and to take immediate steps against Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed (Iqbal & Haider, 2016).

### **China and Kashmir**

China is a trustworthy friend of Pakistan and relations between two countries are always friendly and are deep rooted. There was a time when China openly supported Pakistan's stance that Kashmir issue should be resolved as UN resolution. However, with the passage of time, this stance has been changed toward neutrality. In the views of Giridharan Velamore, an Indian scholar, China has both official and non-official policy on the issue of Kashmir. As per its official stance, China maintains neutral policy and desire that Pakistan and India should decide their clashes including Kashmir by dialogue. According to its non-official stance, it supports Pakistan to balance the power of India ("What is China's", 2016). John W. Garver argues, since long Kashmir is a tool for China to gain diplomatic influence while dealing India and the US in international arena. It is noted that China has changed its stance towards Kashmir with the changing of its posture in the world. For example, China's Kashmir policy transformed from hostility position during 1950s to pro Pakistan position in 1960s and 1970s and to neutral position since 1980s (Garver, 2004, p.1). During 1980s, China started to enhance its relations with India.

Therefore, even now, China remains very conscious about playing any role to resolve the issue of Kashmir. Although China is pursuing a neutral policy on Kashmir, it does not recognize Kashmir as India's integral part. So Pakistan is successful in keeping China neutral but not on Indian side. China desires a peaceful resolution of the dispute through a dialogue, said by Chinese Foreign Office spokesperson when asked to comment on Pakistani media reports that on the sidelines of UNGA sessions in 2016 during his meeting with Nawaz Sharif, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said that "we support Pakistan and we will speak for Pakistan at every forum." In the words of Chinese spokesperson, "the issue of Kashmir is an issue left over from history. Our stance on that is consistent. We hope that the parties concerned will pursue a peaceful settlement through dialogue" (Amin, 2017). It is observed that China had not changed its policy in the wake of Imran Khan's inauguration as Prime Minister in 2018.

### **OIC and Kashmir**

The Nawaz government was able to get support from Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in favour Pakistan's position on Kashmir. On various occasions, OIC condemned the Indian killings and stressed the need to give Kashmiri people the right to decide about their future (Iqbal & Haider, 2016). In April 2017, OIC Secretary General, Yousaf Ahmad Al-Othaimeen visited Pakistan and held talks with Prime Minister's Advisor on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz. OIC Secretary General said that "OIC backs Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir and believes that there is a need to put pressure on India on the issue of human rights violations in Kashmir". He added that "Kashmir has always been on top of the agenda of OIC" ("OIC backs Pakistan", 2017). He told his host that unfortunately India denied a bid of OIC's Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission to visit IOK to assess the situation ("Kashmir issue on top", 2017). In September 2017, on the sidelines of the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of the UNGA, the Contact Group of the OIC on J&K held meeting in New York where it announced solidarity with the people of IOK and urged UNSC to implement its resolutions ("OIC urges UN", 2017). Next year in September 2018, PTI government also highlighted Kashmir issue in UNGA session where Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi also briefed the Contact Group of OIC on J&K about the atrocities and aggression in Kashmir by Indian forces. OIC Secretary General and Contact Group demanded

India to stop killings of Kashmiris and hold plebiscite in Kashmir as per UNSC resolutions (“Pakistan highlights Indian”, 2018).

### **Turkey’s Support on Kashmir**

Under Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan also got friendly support from Turkey whose President Tayyip Erdogan announced to send a fact-finding mission to the IOK. This happened only because Prime Minister Sharif met Turkish President on the sidelines of UN General Assembly meeting in 2016. Even during his visit to India, Erdogan urged his host country to adopt a multilateral dialogue in order to solve the issue of Kashmir between India and Pakistan (“Erdogan Plays Pak”, 2017).

### **UN Human Rights Report on Kashmir**

The last but not the least accomplishment for the PML-N government was the UN Human Rights Council’s pledge to send a fact finding delegation of General Assembly on invitation Pakistan’s Azad Kashmir (Iqbal & Haider, 2016). In addition, in June 2018, UN first time published its human rights violation report on Kashmir and highlighted Indian forces atrocities in IOK. The report highlights that Kashmir dispute had central point and political dimensions between India and Pakistan. It noted that with the passage of time the conflict had not been freezing but it engulfed basic human rights of the people and causing griefs. It emphasized to resolve the issue by political dialogue; stop violence, confirm accountability of violations and abuses and provide redress for victims. And it demanded the UN Human Rights Council should establish an inquiry commission for an inclusive and autonomous international investigation of accusations of human rights violations in Kashmir (Naureen, 2018).

### **Recommendations**

Some viable recommendations related to the issue of Kashmir are as follows:

The first recommendation is traditional. Kashmir issue should be resolved as per UNSC resolutions and both Pakistan and India should continue dialogue process. However, this option is not acceptable to India as it is not in favor of plebiscite and third party intervention, especially after signing of 1972 Simla Accord. This option will only be possible if world powers and bodies like the US, China and Russia, UNO, EU and OIC put pressure on India to accept third party solution. For this, Pakistan should become a power in military and economic fields so that it can convince these powers including India for the resolution of Kashmir issue as per UNSC resolutions.

Second, both Pakistan and India should accept LoC as the international border and status quo. Many experts on Kashmir are in favor of this option. It is viewed that although UN resolutions to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir are still relevant but no member of UNSC is willing to support the idea and it is totally unrealistic to expect plebiscite to happen soon. However, it would not be easy for any Pakistani and Indian leadership to sell this idea to their citizens who have great concerns for Kashmir (Faruqi, 2018).

### **Conclusion**

It is a fact that because of its inconsistent policy, Pakistan is unable to sell its narrative of holding plebiscite in Kashmir and resolve the issue through UNSC resolutions. Actually, Pakistani governments led by various political parties were unable to pursue a standard foreign policy related to Kashmir. Pakistan’s policy on Kashmir has mostly moved around the right to self-determination that means Kashmiri people of both sides should be given a choice through a plebiscite to join either Pakistan or India (Qazi, 2016). Meanwhile, India has maintained that the plebiscite was to confirm the accession of Kashmir to its domain and that has been held in the past (Ambrogio, 2018). Although

Pakistan's policy is superior to Indian stance in terms of law and human rights, this policy has not vigorously been followed by Pakistani governments.

Due to its inconsistent policy, even today Pakistan is struggling to keep Kashmir dispute alive on international forums whereas India under Prime Minister Modi is very much clear on his Kashmir policy. He is combating the issue well by convincing world that Kashmir is an integral part of India and it has no right to intervene in its internal issue. In fact, political elites in Pakistan are unable to develop a long-term policy on Kashmir (Qazi, 2016). Unfortunately, Kashmir policy of Pakistan is based on its fragile domestic politics where Kashmir has lost its place on national agenda. This can be judged through reviewing statements and manifestos of political parties which these announced during election campaigns for general elections held in 2008, 2013 and 2018. Most of the political parties mention very little on Kashmir. That means Kashmir has been losing its position in Pakistani politics. Although PML-N and PTI governments highlighted the issue of Kashmir at various national and international forums and got support from OIC, Turkey, and China, yet Pakistani governments under Musharraf, Zardari, Sharif and even Khan have been unable to convince the US to play its mediatory role in resolving Kashmir issue. Even Pakistani leadership was not able to exploit human rights violations of Indian forces in IOK as mentioned by the UN Human Rights Report published in June 2018. Although international community is interested in preventing nuclear conflict between Pakistan and India, it is unable to press India to resolve the issue. It is because India is seen as a major player at global level whereas Pakistan's importance can only be felt at regional level, its portrayal of a breeding ground of terrorists remains another pivotal problem (Qazi, 2016). There is a great need to dispel this mindset and take steps to eradicate terrorist elements. In addition, government should act to become a military and economic power. This would strengthen Pakistan's position in presenting its appropriate stance on Kashmir.

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